



## ELITE COMBAT TROPHY FOR LEADERSHIP AWARDED

The recipient of the 2010 Leftwich trophy for courage and outstanding leadership is Capt. Timothy R. Sparks. Sparks, a Mustang Officer, was the Commanding Officer of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, during combat operations conducted in southern Afghanistan that included the assault on the Taliban stronghold of Marjah. "The greatest thing about it is the fact that the company was recognized," Sparks said. He praised his Marines for making the difficult transition to counterinsurgency after Operation Moshtarak's initial helicopter-borne assault into the heart of poppy-rich Marjah. "It was just incredible to watch these 22-year-old men out there dealing with problems that most people can't fathom while their lives are in danger," Sparks said. The Leftwich Trophy for Outstanding Leadership is an award presented annually in memory of Lieutenant Colonel William Groom Leftwich, U.S. Marine Corps, killed in action in the Republic of Vietnam in November 1970.



Eligible nominees are Marine Captains in the Ground Combat Arms serving on active duty as a company or battery commander with the ground forces of the Fleet Marine Force at the time of nomination. The trophy is provided to the Marine Corps through an endowment by the H. Ross Perot Foundation. LtCol Leftwich and Mr. Perot were classmates at the U.S. Naval Academy. The trophy itself was designed by Mr. Felix de Welden, designer of the Marine Corps War Memorial in Washington, D.C.

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## GROUND AWARDS DINNER



The Marine Corps Association (MCA) hosted the 8th Annual Ground Awards Dinner on Thursday, May 5 at the Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel in Arlington, Virginia. Co-hosted by HQMC Plans, Policies and Operations (PP&O) Division, Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., who served as guest

speaker and senior awards presenter alongside SgtMaj Carlton Kent. The evening recognized the professional achievements of the top performing officers and enlisted Marines in the ground community. The 2010 Marine of the Year Award was presented to the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Marine Divisions. 1stLt Guy a Zierk was awarded with the Chambers Award for Outstanding Leadership by a Company Grade Officer. Additionally, the Hulbert Award for Outstanding Leadership by a Marine Gunner was presented to CWO-2 Paul W. Sandy. The Zembiec Award recognized Capt Matthew H. Lampert for Outstanding Leadership in the USMC Forces Special Operations Command, and Sgt. Ryan Strickland was awarded the MARSOC NCO/Critical Skills Operator of the Year.

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## NEWS

## MARINE COMMANDANT, GEN. JAMES F. AMOS WRITES, "STORIES OF OUR BRAVE MARINES TEACH US WHAT IT MEANS TO BE TRULY SELFLESS."

On Tuesday, *The Hill* featured an article written by Gen. James F. Amos, 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps, in which he expressed his admiration for the strength and determination wounded warriors exemplify. "The story of our wounded warriors is one of sacrifice, selfless service, indomitable spirit, determination and fidelity. Our nation places our freedoms and hopes for a more peaceful world on the shoulders of these brave, young men and women who serve without complaint in dangerous places far from home," Amos said. The Commandant also shared 1st Lt Cameron West's story. West was wounded by an improvised explosive device (IED) that severed his left leg Sangin, Afghanistan. The explosion killed one Marine in West's unit and injured another Marine and a Navy corpsman. During the explosion aftermath, West kept his composure and continued to lead his Marines. "These young heroes represent the highest qualities of service to our nation and to its people. Let their example remind us all of what it means to be truly selfless and just how much the human spirit can endure, accomplish and overcome," Amos said.



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[Also Read : Gen. Amos' Gazette article on "Reshaping America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness" >>](#)

## FINALLY, A FIGHTING FORCE



Michael O'Hanlon, a senior fellow at the Brookings' Institute, was in Helmand Province earlier this month, traveling with Gen. Amos. In an article for the *New York Times*, O'Hanlon wrote of his trip that, "despite the recent setbacks and other problems, my impression of today's Afghan



security forces was encouraging. Helmand Province, for years a Taliban stronghold, has in the past year or so seen remarkable progress. Almost all of the populated parts of the province are now under the control of the

Afghan government and the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force. The region is not completely safe, to be sure. But most major roads are serviceable, and government officials now generally use them instead of NATO helicopters to get around. Markets are open; schools have increased almost 50 percent in number since late 2009; twice as many Afghan officials work in local governments as did a year ago; and poppy production is down."

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## THROUGH THE RANKS: LANCE CORPORAL



Barely old enough to drink, Lance Cpl. Shawn Cole has done more in his 21 years than most ever will in an entire lifetime. He is already on his second tour to Afghanistan. This time, instead of only obeying the orders given him by superiors, he is now leading and mentoring his own Marines. Third from the bottom on the hierarchy chart, as a fireteam leader, his three Marines look to him to not only keep them safe and attentive during their foot patrols through the towns in Helmand Province, but he is also responsible for assisting them

in dealing with any other issues they face to include girlfriend problems, missing loved ones, or illnesses. "Sometimes it's rough, and you kind of just want to make it go away, but at the end of the day, you're always proud to be a Marine, because you're going through things the average American can't even fathom," stated Cole. Through the Ranks' is a recurring commentary written by Cpl. Colby W. Brown, Regimental Combat Team 1. Each commentary will focus on a day in the life of a deployed Marine from 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment and will highlight an individual's personal experience through the perspective of his rank. The next commentary on a life of a Marine Corporal, will be released in a couple weeks.

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## TORNADO TEARS MARINES' HOMES

The death toll from the devastating tornado that tore through Joplin, Mo., has soared to 125, making it the deadliest single tornado in nearly 60 years, according to federal records. Marine recruiters were among those whose homes were destroyed. Pictured right, Maj. Thomas McGee, Commanding Officer of Recruiting Station Kansas city, tries to find a ladder among debris so that he and others can begin patching one of his Marine's roof.

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[Also Read: How to prepare for a tornado >>](#)



## RESPECTED MARINE BAND, HUMBLLED IN CHINA



The U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific Band made history as the Marine Corps' first band to perform on a formal invitation by the Chinese government. The band arrived in Shanghai on April 27 to prepare for their performance in the 2011 Shanghai Spring Music Festival. They performed a field show, where they marched in different configurations while under a review, titled "The Planets," in front of a crowd of 2,000 people, along with other ensembles from around Southeast Asia. "Our

initial reaction to the invite was absolute astonishment," Chief Warrant Officer 2 Bryan P. Sherlock, officer in charge, MarForPac Band, said. "It was a great honor, and I was very anxious to make the trip happen." While in Shanghai, the band also played at local schools, performed concerts in various communities and taught basic music concepts to music students at Fudan University. "The trip, overall, was a cultural and educational eye-opener,"

said Cpl. Andrew N. Whitmire, trumpet player, MarForPac band. "We were able to share our passion for music with the students while at the same time be inspired by their love and eagerness to learn. Their respect and admiration for what we do every day is the most humbling and heart-warming experience I've ever had."

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## MARINES LOCKED AND LOADED FOR NY FLEET WEEK



More than 900 Marines will be attending the 2011 Fleet Week event in New York City, scheduled to run May 25 to June 1. During Fleet Week, citizens will have the opportunity to watch helicopter raid demonstrations and get an up-close and personal experience with Marines and their gear. Marine Corps participation will include M1A1 Tanks, MV-22 Ospreys, AV-8B Harriers, M777 howitzers, military working dogs, martial arts, and a variety of weapons will all be on display for the general public. "We are

excited for the opportunity for our Marines to share their experience and spend that one-on-one time with their fellow Americans," said Col. Frank Donovan, commanding officer, 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit. The scheduled locations of demonstrations and displays include: Coney Island, Staten Island, Times Square, Orchard Beach, Battery Park, Eisenhower Park, Corona Park, Playland Park, and Clove Lake Park.

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[In 24 days, Marine Week St. Louis, June 20-26. Check out the full schedule >>](#)

## BLOGS

### ONE MARINE'S VIEW



During the 6th Annual Milblog Conference, "One Marines View" was



awarded the 5th  
Annual Marine

Blog of the Year. In 2005, while on his first deployment to Iraq, Major Pain started the blog to share his personal experiences. "There was a lot to experience and a lot to write about that America probably wasn't going to hear about. Some situations were hilarious and some very tragic," Pain said. In an exclusive online interview with the Marine Corps Connection, Pain stated the biggest goal of "One Marine's View" is to continue to disseminate the story of the young Marine and introduce information to readers, so they too can understand the Marine Corps. "Who doesn't like a great story? Who doesn't love Marines (besides the enemy!), so hopefully overtime we will bring unique stories to those that haven't been fully introduced to their Marine Corps," Pain said. Within One Marine's View there is a section called "Heroes Call". It is dedicated to those that have paid the ultimate sacrifice for America. "If I could, I would interview those heroes that make the greatest difference. Those warriors' young and old that don't come back from war, past and present. They deserve the best respect we can give them," Pain said.

[Click here to visit One 'Marine's View' >>](#)

## HEROES

### AIR FORCE THUNDERBIRDS SALUTE MARINE

On Saturday, May 21, a fallen Marine was recognized by the U.S. Air Force Thunderbird Air Demonstration Team at Andrews Air Force Base, Md. Lance Cpl. Terry E. Honeycutt, Jr.'s name was painted onto the inside of the nose wheel gear door of Thunderbird #1 jet, fittingly displayed during the 2011 Joint Services Open House. Lance Cpl. Honeycutt of Waldorf, Md., died last October in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, from wounds suffered while conducting standard combat operations with 2nd Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment. The Thunderbirds recently began incorporating a Fallen Warrior Program at their demonstrations to recognize service members from the community who had given their life in service to their country. With approval from the next of kin of the fallen, the name is painted on the aircraft. Lance Cpl. Honeycutt's mother, Christine Honeycutt, said her son always wanted to fly planes when he was a

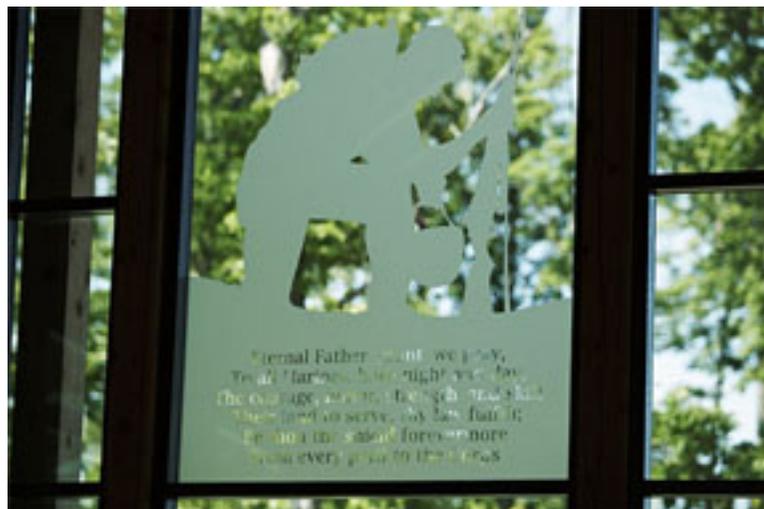


child. Air Force Lieutenant Col. Case Cunningham, lead commander and pilot of Thunderbird #1 jet, was honored to recognize and dedicate the demonstration in Lance Cpl. Honeycutt's name. "This is our way of thanking our service members."

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## "SACRIFICE WINDOW" IN SEMPER FIDELIS MEMORIAL CHAPEL DEDICATED TO DEVOTED, FALLEN CHAPLAIN



The "Sacrifice Window" in the Semper Fidelis Memorial Chapel at the National Museum of the Marine Corps was dedicated to Chaplain Vincent Capodanno on May 11. The Marine Corps Heritage Foundation recognized Chaplain Capodanno's for his dedicated service to Marines and the ultimate sacrifice he made in Vietnam, in an effort to save a Marine's life. The private ceremony at the Chapel remembered Chaplain Capodanno for his unwavering support of Marines in combat and

his deserved recognition as the only chaplain to receive the Medal of Honor for service in the Marine Corps. On September 4, 1967, while serving with the 5th Marines, Chaplain Capodanno learned 2d Platoon, Company M was engaged in a violent battle in Quang Tin Province, resulting in many U.S. casualties. Chaplain Capodanno volunteered to work his way through the battlefield to administer last rites and provide aid to his Marines. Each window in the Semper Fidelis Memorial Chapel is titled with a word that describes the ethos of the Marine Corps. The Foundation dedicated the "Sacrifice Window" to forever remember the service of Chaplain Capodanno. In 2006, the Roman Catholic Church also provided an enduring honor to the Chaplain, declaring him a Servant of God, the first step towards canonization.

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## EVENTS

### THEATER OF WAR AT WOMEN'S MEMORIAL

The DC premiere of the Theater of War: Female Warrior Program will take place June 3 - 4 at the Women's Memorial at Arlington Cemetery. The program, produced and presented by Theater of War Productions, will feature scenes from Sophocles' Ajax with the award winning actress Elizabeth Marvel (True Grit, Burn After Reading, and multiple OBIE Award recipient) playing the role of Ajax. The performance will be followed by a community panel and town hall discussion about the aspects military service, deployment, and post-deployment transition that uniquely impact female service members. For more information about the Female Warrior Program at the Women's Memorial, please visit: [www.womensmemorial.org](http://www.womensmemorial.org).



## CAMP LEJEUNE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION WEBCAST



Numerous deployed Marines and families around the world will be able to witness the Lejeune High school graduation through a Defense Video & Imagery Distribution System (DVIDS) Webcast. WNCT in North Carolina will be supporting by filming the ceremony and transmitting it live to DVIDS via satellite. The transmission will then go up live as a Webcast, viewable from the DVIDS site, [www.dvidshub.net](http://www.dvidshub.net).

